

Message Text

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SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING FOR MONDAY,
DECEMBER 27, 1976

FOR COVEY FROM S/PRS (TRATTNER)

NO. 1

1. SECRETARY'S LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PAPERS: WASHPOST'S
OBERDORFER QUOTED FROM BULLETIN FROM U.S. ARCHIVIST RHOADS
OF NOV. 15, 1976 TO HEADS OF ALL FEDERAL AGENCIES THAT
"DEFINITION OF PERSONAL PAPERS COVERS MATERIAL PERTAINING
SOLELY TO AN INDIVIDUAL'S PRIVATE AFFAIRS"; THAT
"CORRESPONDENCE DESIGNATED PERSONAL, CONFIDENTIAL OR
PRIVATE BUT RELEVANT TO CONDUCT OF PUBLIC BUSINESS IS NONE-
THELESS AN OFFICIAL RECORD SUBJECT TO PROVISIONS OF
FEDERAL LAW PERTINENT TO MAINTENANCE AND DISPOSAL OF SUCH
RECORDS"; AND THAT "OFFICIAL RECORDS ARE PUBLIC RECORDS
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AND BELONG TO THE OFFICE RATHER THAN THE OFFICER." HE
ASKED HOW DEPARTMENT CAN SQUARE THIS WITH ITS POSITION
THAT SECRETARY CAN TREAT AS PERSONAL PROPERTY RECORDS OF
TELEPHONE CALLS WHICH COVER MATERIAL CLEARLY OTHER THAN

THAT PERTAINING SOLELY TO HIS PRIVATE AFFAIRS. ACTING

DEPUTY SPOKESMAN (TRATTNER) NOTED WE HAD GIVEN DEPARTMENT'S REASONING ON GENERAL SUBJECT AT SOME LENGTH LAST WEEK, BUT AGREED TO TRY TO LOOK INTO SPECIFIC QUESTION.

SAME QUESTIONER ALSO READ FROM ITEM IN WHAT HE TERMED DEPARTMENT COMMUNICATIONS AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT DOCUMENT ON WHAT HE CALLED "SEPARATION OF PERSONAL FROM OFFICIAL RECORDS". THIS ITEM, AS HE QUOTED IT, REQUIRES THAT "RECORDS OF PERSONAL CHARACTER WHICH PERTAIN ONLY TO INDIVIDUAL'S PRIVATE AFFAIRS AND WHICH ARE KEPT IN THE OFFICE OF A DEPARTMENTAL OR POST EMPLOYEE ARE TO BE CLEARLY DESIGNATED AS PERSONAL" AND "ARE TO BE FILED SEPARATELY FROM OFFICIAL RECORDS OF THE OFFICE AT ALL TIMES. WHEN OFFICIAL POLICY MATTERS ARE DISCUSSED IN PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE, THAT PORTION PERTAINING TO FUNCTIONS OR ACTIVITIES OF DEPARTMENT OR A POST IS TO BE EXTRACTED AND MADE A PART OF THE OFFICIAL RECORDS". QUESTIONER WANTED TO KNOW IF ALL PORTIONS OF TELEPHONE MEMORANDA PERTAINING TO FUNCTIONS OR ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT ARE BEING EXTRACTED AND MADE PART OF OFFICIAL RECORDS (IN CONTRAST WITH SPOKESMAN'S STATEMENT LAST WEEK THAT, IN LINE WITH RECOMMENDATION OF LEIGH MEMO TO SECRETARY, REVIEW OF TELEPHONE RECORDS WAS UNDERWAY AND THAT EXTRACTS OR SUMMARIES WOULD BE MADE FOR OFFICIAL RECORDS IF SAME MATERIAL NOT ALREADY REFLECTED IN OTHER OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS). IN RESPONSE, WE AGREED LOOK INTO THIS QUESTION AS WELL.

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2. NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATE OF SOVIET MILITARY CAPACITY AND INTENTIONS: ASKED FOR COMMENT, ACTING DEPUTY SPOKESMAN SAID IT IS TRUE THAT PANEL OF OUTSIDE EXPERTS WAS ASKED TO STUDY SOVIET STRATEGIC PROGRAMS AND OBJECTIVES IN CONJUNCTION WITH PREPARATION OF THIS YEAR'S ESTIMATE BY INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY. BUT IT IS NOT APPROPRIATE FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO COMMENT ON RESULTS OF STUDY. ASKED IF DEPARTMENT IS OBLIGED IN ANY SPECIFIC WAY TO COMPLY WITH ASSESSMENTS MADE IN NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE ESTIMATES IN FORMULATION OF DEPARTMENT POLICY, WE SAID WE WOULD TRY TO GET REPLY.

ROBINSON

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